

## Material World

## Hold Everything

Reusable shopping bags from around the globe



The netted cotton **Ecobag** (\$8; [www.reusablebags.com](http://www.reusablebags.com)), a design based on a bag popular in Soviet-era Russia called an *avoska*, can hold up to 40 pounds of goods. When not in use, it compresses into a tiny ball, so you can always have it on hand.



In southern India, grocery bags are commonly made out of long-lasting, eco-friendly jute. The Kasuthi Women's Empowerment Group, an Indian cooperative, handmakes the **Jute Symphony Bag** (\$42; [www.handmadeexpressions.net](http://www.handmadeexpressions.net)).



The **Reisenthal Foldable Trolley** (\$25; [www.reusablebags.com](http://www.reusablebags.com)), a two-wheeled cart that holds as much as two standard grocery bags' worth of food, is popular throughout Europe. It folds into a small handled pouch for carrying.



Based on a design from Japan's Edo period (1603-1867), the **Furoshiki** (from \$9; [www.furoshiki.com](http://www.furoshiki.com)) is promoted by the Japanese government as an alternative to plastic, as tied using origami techniques. Instructions for which come with the bag.



The **Toocan Juicy Pannier** (\$85; [www.detours.us](http://www.detours.us)) is made from recycled juice packs by a Filipino women's group. The insulated bicycle saddlebag can be detached and used as a shoulder bag. It holds—and keeps cold—15 pounds of perishables.



The strong-walled **Bolga Basket** (\$33; [www.basketsfromafrica.com](http://www.basketsfromafrica.com)), which helps protect delicate items, is woven using *veta vera* grass, which grows in the semi-arid expanses of Ghana's Upper East Region. It's hand-made by Ghana's Frafra tribe.



A New Orleans-based company makes the **Its-laS-tik** (\$15; [www.whatsurbag-usa.com](http://www.whatsurbag-usa.com)), a strong and stretchy nylon-Lycra sack that comes in scores of vibrant colors and patterns and holds twice as much as a standard plastic shopping bag.



In 1992, Marybeth Shaw was an architecture student in Paris when she noticed women breaking baguettes in order to fit them into their totes. Her **Sac à Baguette** (from \$299; [www.sacabaguette.com](http://www.sacabaguette.com)) has a quiver for holding a full-length French loaf.



In China, a plastic-bag ban has popularized the use of the **Recycled Rice Bag** (\$10; [www.reusablebags.com](http://www.reusablebags.com)). Made of flexible propylene, it can be folded and stashed until you're ready to deploy it. The bag will hold 88 pounds of groceries. —Riddhi Shah

## Southern Comforts

The world's most remote mini-mart

**E**ARLY ANTARCTIC explorers may have eaten penguins, but the only ones in stock at McMurdo Station, Antarctica's biggest research facility, are of the plush variety. You can find these stuffed animals at the base store, alongside a global array of snack foods: Cadbury chocolates from England, Tui beer from New Zealand, Japanese ramen noodles, and Doritos.

Located on Ross Island, about 850 miles from the South Pole, McMurdo can feel like a rugged mining camp. But, along with a dining hall serving salads and fresh pies, this American base's well-stocked store, which resembles a mini-mart crossed with a souvenir shop, allows the hundreds of scientists who live here October to February to eat almost as if they were back home.

Most goods arrive by sea in one big annual shipment in February, but hot sellers like Sriracha sauce and Australian shiraz, are flown in weekly as weather permits aboard U.S. military aircraft. Luckily for McMurdo's chile- and wine-loving residents, the \$3-per-pound cost of airlifting goods to the base is paid for by Uncle Sam, and the store sells its stock at cost. A 17-ounce bottle of Sriracha runs just \$3.40, even less than you'd pay for it state-side. —Ed Forgotson

